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ABSTRACT

Two conference papers describing various collaborative arrangements within the educational community among teachers, students and others are presented in this document. The first paper, "Successful Collaborations" (Eugene Cota-Robles), describes the following projects in California that seek to forge collaborations to improve the education of minority students: (1) MESA--mathematics, engineering, science, and achievement, initiated at the School of Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley; (2) the California Writing Project; (3) the California Mathematics Project; (4) the linguistic minority project; (5) the Black Eligibility Study; (6) PUENTE, which uses mentors from the Hispanic community to advise both students and counselors at community colleges; and (7) Project TEAMS--Teaching Excellence and Achievemennt in Minority Schools. In the second paper, "Forging Collaborations" (Winston Doby), education is described as a team sport: successful collaborations can produce a synergistic effect, whereby the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. (BJV)

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COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

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COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Successful Collaborations

Eugene Cota-Robles
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The preceding speakers have made a fundamental point: The minority community itself must take an important role in improving achievement among minority youngsters. That aside, we still have to work with the schools in order to improve the education of underachieving minorities. We think this is possible in a number of ways.

Improving education requires the strengthening of certain activities. First, we must improve and strengthen instructional strategies that are effective for all students. Second, we must improve and strengthen the curriculum, particularly in schools that have large minority enrollments. We must also strengthen positive contributions by parents and other family members. We must improve the organizational ability of schools and other educational institutions. We must strengthen assessment tools and practices and we must strengthen students' expectations of themselves. Finally, we must strengthen the cultural and social support systems that students require to succeed in school. Our goal is to have full participation by minority students in the educational process. Until we achieve that goal, special efforts will be required in each one of the contexts outlined above. What may be less clear, however, is that special efforts are also needed to achieve and enhance effects across these different contexts.

One way to talk about these efforts is to talk about forging collaborations. The need for this kind of collaboration is generated by cultural discontinuity. Students learn and develop as whole individuals, and the background of their work in the school is participation in a larger world. We have to find ways, then, to bridge this discontinuity.

Generally, reform efforts deal only with the part of the student that is in school, and therefore deals only with part of the student's world. For example, some reform efforts focus on the development of skills but ignore problems created for students by unclear,

ambiguous, or unreasonable class assignments. Others focus on improving the curriculum without involving in those efforts the classroom teachers who will have to implement these new reforms. Still other efforts are designed to improve the skills of individual teachers without addressing problems of school organization that keep teachers from being more effective. So reform movements are valuable, but frequently, unless they work across the system, they are not particularly useful. Reform effort has been very helpful for individual teachers, but substantial long-lasting improvements in the education of minority students will require that we find ways to broaden the objectives of these programs and increase collaboration among them, as well as within.

Let me tell you about a few University of California case histories in bridging K-12 and higher education. When implemented, these programs had a sharp focus, but as they achieved some success, the focus of each expanded and they have had to develop associations and collaborations in a broader context. The first of these examples is a program we call MESA: mathematics, engineering, science and achievement.

This particular program was started in Berkeley in 1970 through the School of Engineering. Faculty members were interested in finding ways in which more black students could attend engineering school. The program moved slowly until it became clear to industrial engineers that there was a real need to help and participate in this program. They started to work with the University, and in doing so, established connections between companies and the School of Engineering at Berkeley and with the schools in Oakland. MESA limped along at first, but now is very, very successful. MESA recently graduated forty engineers from the University of California at Berkeley who are Black and Chicano youngsters, youngsters that probably would not have been able to go through the system without the help of MESA. In addition, from those forty that went through the minority engineering program, fourteen are going on to graduate school and preparing themselves for advanced training. Can you imagine the pressure these young minority engineers felt to take immediate employment? Working together permitted them to set higher goals and, perhaps, to work towards contributing their talents to faculties of the University of California. I feel that one of the most important things required to improve schools is that the faculties be diversified.

Other collaborative activities that are now being directed toward minority achievement are the California Writing Project and the California Mathematics Project. In these two programs, the University is working with teachers to upgrade their skills in writing and mathematics. Part of the focus of these programs is on teachers in minority schools, and the programs stress that the teachers who go back to those minority schools have a responsibility to help the other teachers. We are interested in improving the skills of teachers, but we also are interested in these teachers acknowledging that they have additional responsibilities, and one is to work intensively to upgrade the education that minority youngsters receive.

We are working on two other projects through the University that are types of collaborations. One is the linguistic minority project, which funds faculty to conduct research on the education of linguistic minority youngsters. One of our faculty that works in this area, Lillie Wong-Filmore, recently gave some staggering information to the University of California Regents. She reported that the grade point average of Asian students at the University of California at Berkeley is inversely proportional to the length of time they have spent in California schools. She also pointed out that quality of teaching is crucial to the education of minority youngsters. Black and Hispanic youngsters, particularly, walk away from schools where instruction is inadequate. Asian students, on the other hand, acknowledge and accept that inadequacy and work harder to obtain high GPAs. The cultural context is very important. These are the kinds of studies that University faculty are contributing to the efforts to upgrade minority education.

The final study that I want to mention is the Black Eligibility Study, which has been generated primarily through the interest of individuals in the University such as Winston Doby and Joe Watson. They have convinced President Gardner that we must make an extended examination of why Black students show a decline in eligibility for the University. This must not be just a long-range view, we must also develop some short-term intervention strategies.

There are three kinds of collaboration. One is collaboration among similar professionals. An example would be the California Mathematics Project, a collaboration of teachers working together, teacher to teacher. The Achievement Council is a principal to principal collaboration. The Black Eligibility Study is heavily faculty to faculty. These kinds of collaborations are very useful.

Collaborations among individuals who occupy very different positions within the educational enterprise are a second kind. For example, the work we have done in MESA with teachers, counselors, parents, and students has permitted us to develop collaborations that are very effective. A very specific example of this kind of cross-collaboration is the project PUENTE, a collaboration between the community colleges and the University PUENTE is an expansion of the Writing Project. It uses mentors from the Hispanic community to advise not only the students in California community colleges, but the counselors as well.

A third type of collaboration is among different institutions, and this is necessary to insure that change is structural and longstanding. An example is Project TEAMS, Teaching Excellence and Achievement in Minority Schools, a project put together this year. In this program, the Math Project, the Writing Project, the Achievement Council, and the UCLA effort in staff development are all tied together to make one entity with a focus on pushing excellence and achievement in minority schools.

It is important to remember that the students, their parents, and their friends can remain relatively untouched by our more ambitious efforts to bring collaboration. In fact, if we fail to provide increased opportunities for students to work more effectively with those immediately involved in their education -- their peers, teachers, parents, and other family members -- the best of our efforts, no matter how hard we try, will be ineffective.

One of the most important types of collaboration that we should encourage is collaboration in the classroom, collaboration between students. Classrooms must be redesigned so that minority students want to participate in school. They must have numerous opportunities to participate, and their participation and academic pursuits must be rewarded consistently. Collaboration in the classroom between students and teachers, and among the students themselves, is the key to this kind of participation, not only for minority students, but for the rest of the world as well.

Classroom collaboration is not something most of us here are involved with directly on a daily basis, but we can certainly keep it in mind as we think about opportunities and proposals for increasing collaboration among the institutions and projects with which we are directly involved.

COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Forging Collaborations

Winston Doby
Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
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We have a great challenge ahead of us if we are going to take the lineup of recommendations we've heard today and make them work for the betterment of the schools. Now is the time to move beyond the sharing of knowledge and insights and to begin deliberations on strategies to apply these concepts to the betterment of schools that serve minority youngsters. To begin that process, I suggest that an important first step is the creation of networks or infrastructures among those of us who share a common goal. Making schools work for underachieving minorities will require the successful collaboration of those of us who want to see it happen.

One of my favorite words is synergy. Synergy: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In medical terms, drugs are said to have synergistic effects when they increase the effects of each other. In team sports, some coaches and players have the ability to make the team better than the simple sum of the individual talents represented on the team. I believe that successful collaborations depend on several factors, and I will point out two examples to try and identify some of these factors.

Locally, the Lakers, in my view, represent the most recent example in sports. The Lakers had a common vision, to be the best in the NBA. They had excellent leadership from both the owner and what I would term a synergistic coach, a coach capable of getting his players to accept their roles and thereby making the Lakers a stronger team. They had talented players who agreed to accept these roles and who believed in themselves, who believed in their coach and in the Lakers system. Of course, they had Magic Johnson. The supreme synergistic agent.

Another example of a successful collaboration is the organization that created this conference, the Center for Research on Evaluation Standards and Student Testing, CRESST. It is a creative national organization. It works because the stakeholders share a common belief in the importance of testing and the importance of

evaluation in improving schools and informing public policy. The CRESST team of established researchers serves as the catalyst for bringing together educators, education practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, and they do it at all levels. Clearly, this conference is an excellent example of a successful collaboration.

I'm involved in yet another collaboration. This is a group whose goal is to increase the number of black students in Los Angeles County who are eligible to attend selected county colleges and universities. The stakeholders in this collaboration represent twenty-six communities organizations, seven school districts, over one hundred colleges and universities, and several major companies in the Los Angeles area. They are working in collaboration on behalf of over 2,000 ninth grade black youngsters. One organization, the 100 Black Men of Los Angeles, serves as the community catalyst to forge the collaboration necessary to make it all work.

Only a year old, the program has generated nearly one million dollars from community support. It involves over 1,000 community leaders and role models, and it has all of the ingredients of a successful collaboration: a common vision, a catalytic agent, stakeholders who are committed and involved, and, most importantly, a belief that in working together we can make a greater difference than working separately. It is this last factor on which I would like to encourage you to concentrate.

I believe that those of us who are here at this conference have the opportunity to begin a collaboration of our own on behalf of the youngsters served in minority schools. I believe that only by working together can we make such schools work for underachieving minority students. I believe that we are the synergistic agents who can make the schools make a difference. I hope that we take on that challenge. In my view, education is a team sport.